

Lick Fork Water Project

Lick Fork Water Project Groundbreaking

Dickenson County, Virginia

May 9, 2005

I am pleased to return to Dickenson County this morning to participate in the groundbreaking ceremony for a new public water project for the residents of the Lick Fork community.

Today's groundbreaking is the third major event held this spring in Dickenson County to mark the establishment or improvement of public drinking water service. Last month, I joined Dickenson County officials in celebrating the new public water service for 260 homes and businesses in the communities of Bear Pen Creek, Cutter Creek and Pine Creek. Later in April, we gathered again to break ground for the very large Big Caney Water Improvement project - a \$9.5 million effort which will improve the public water service for 1/3 of all Dickenson County residents.

These projects, all of which have obtained significant amounts of federal financial support, are outstanding examples of the progress we are making in Dickenson County in establishing public water and sewer infrastructure for residents.

Approximately 20 years ago, only 40 percent of Dickenson County residents had access to publicly provided drinking water. Since that time, we have actively worked to obtain millions in federal funding to establish new water systems in Dickenson County, including \$32 million in the past 10 years alone. Today, everyone here can proudly acknowledge that this work on the part of many people has born fruit. Today, 79 percent of all Dickenson County homes have access to publicly funded water systems, and that percentage will increase to 85 percent following the completion of the major water project in the Lick Creek community and the project for which we break ground today here in the Lick Fork community. Both of these infrastructure projects are expected to be completed later this year.

The total cost of construction for the Lick Fork water project is \$600,000. Of this total amount, \$575,000 is being provided, at my request, by the U.S. Department of Interior through its Abandoned Mined Reclamation fund. The balance of the funding necessary to construct the new water system is being provided by Dickenson County.

Residents in the Lick Fork community currently rely upon private wells for their drinking water. Several of the private wells have been found to contain iron and other contaminants in recent years, forcing families to haul or purchase water for drinking.

The new public water system for which we are breaking ground today will serve 29 households in the community of Lick Fork and the new Alpha Natural Resources mining operation.

Using the allocated federal and local funds, 25,000 feet of new water lines will be installed along Route 777, Route 703, Route 665, Route 72 and Keith Hollow Road in the Lick Fork community. In addition, one water pump station will be constructed, and a 10,000 gallon water storage tank will be installed, both at Keith Hollow. The Dickenson County Public Service Authority will maintain the new system, and it is expected that the new public water service will be available to residents this fall.

There are several individuals who deserve our thanks today for the efforts they have made on behalf of this project and their commitment to establishing safe and reliable drinking water for the residents of Dickenson County, and I will take the opportunity of these remarks to recognize these individuals.

Scott Moore, Chairman of the Dickenson County Board of Supervisors; Bobby Perrigan, member of the Board representing the Lick Fork community; Carl Skeens, former member of the Board of Supervisors who spearheaded this project at its beginning; and other members of the Board; deserve our thanks for their leadership in the effort to establish public drinking water for the Lick Fork community.

I also want to thank Damon Rasnick, Chairman of the Dickenson County Public Service Authority; Ron Phillips, Executive Director of the PSA; and the excellent staff at the PSA. Without these dedicated individuals, we would not be celebrating the outstanding strides Dickenson County is making in infrastructure development.

I also want to recognize Keith Viers, Dickenson County Administrator, and Leman Kendrick, County Engineer, for their effective work in aid of this project.

Finally, I want to thank my new Project Manager, Courtney Lamie, for her persistent and persuasive work in achieving this success. Her outstanding work has substantially contributed to the success that we celebrate today.

Today's ceremony is an example of what can be achieved when citizens and government officials at the local and federal levels work together in aid of a common purpose. For that cooperation and successful work in establishing public water service for the Lick Fork community, I want to commend everyone here and offer special congratulations to the residents and business owners who will be receiving the new water service.